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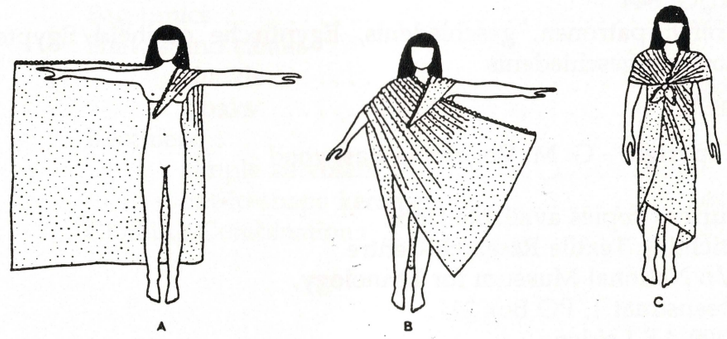
PATTERNS FOR

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CLOTHING



Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

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Patterns for .... is a new series of books produced by the Textile Research Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands. The books are intended to be a general introduction to either an historical or ethnic group of clothing, with easy to follow instructions for their reconstruction. Each book is written by a specialist in that particular field.

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Patterns for the clothing of a Viking king
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INTRODUCTION

There has long been an interest in the range of clothing worn by the Ancient Egyptians, especially that of deities or the pharaoh and members of his court. Yet there is surprisingly little information available about the appearance of garments worn on a daily basis, and on how these clothes were made. It is the aim of this booklet to describe how the basic garments were constructed and to give patterns and instructions for their recreation. All of these patterns are based on surviving, Pharaonic garments, now in various museums in Egypt, Europe and North America. Diagrams are given throughout the text to explain how these clothes may have been worn. In addition there are numerous illustrations based on original sculptures and tomb paintings to show how the Egyptians depicted their garments.

Pharaonic Egyptian clothing can be divided into two basic types: wrap-arounds and cut-to-shapes.

The wrap-around garments include kilts; skirts; some of the dresses; cloaks and finally, shawls. This type of garment literally consists of a length of cloth wrapped around the body in various ways.

Cut-to-shape garments include loincloths; bag-tunics and one type of dress. All these garments tend to be simple triangles or rectangles, sewn down some or all of the edges and fastened with string ties. There is no evidence to suggest that the garments were closely tailored to fit individual figures. No garments from the Pharaonic period have been recorded with darts or complex shaping, elements which are common with modern clothing.

In many cultures the type of clothes worn by a person reflect their social status. In Ancient Egypt, however, differences in rank were generally indicated by the quality of the cloth rather than the way in which the garment was constructed. For example the loincloths and bag-tunics worn by workmen tended to be made of a strong and solid cloth, while those belonging to Tut'ankhamun, a king or pharaoh, were made from a linen cloth which is so fine as to be silk-like in appearance.

Unlike garments worn nowadays there are few variations in how a basic Egyptian garment was constructed and in most cases the form of the garment remained the same for many decades, if not centuries.

Finally, items of clothing worn by children have survived and it would appear that they normally wore the same range of

garments as their same-sex parents. The difference between the garments worn by adults and children lies the size of the item.

Sewing techniques in Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptian clothing was made in as simple a manner as possible. Drape, rather than tailoring, was of importance. In addition, only a limited range of constructional details such as seams and hems were used. The most common of these are: simple hems; rolled and whipped hems; simple (open) seams and lap-over seams. Other seams known from the Pharaonic world include a form of run and fell seam and overcast seams. But these do not occur so frequently on items of clothing. In general a minimum of decoration was used and most garments were white. Nevertheless, exceptions do occur, and in the text indications are given of various methods of decorating and where they may occur.

The quality of sewing in Ancient Egypt seems to have depended on the ability of the person actually doing the work. Sometimes, for example, fine cloth was worked with coarse stitching, while a relatively coarse cloth was neatly sewn. In general, however, the stitching found on Egyptian cloth is fine and regular in appearance.

Numerous bronze, copper and silver needles have been found at various sites in Egypt which range in diameter from a few millimetres to a centimetre. In addition, fine needles made from pierced fish bones are known. It is likely that such metal and bone needles were used to sew the type of garments described in this booklet.

The sewing thread used in Egypt was usually made from two s-spun linen threads which were Z-plyed. The yarn varied in size from fine (0.02-3 mm) to coarse (0.6-8 mm).

Although cloth is occasionally found with thorns stuck into it, sewing pins were not commonly used in Ancient Egypt, if at all. Instead, the cloth was simply held in the hand in order to keep the various elements of a garment together while they were being stitched.

Garments have been found which were mended and darned on several occasions and it would appear that most people took care to keep their clothing in a good state of repair.

Reconstructing the garments

The majority of the Pharaonic Egyptian garments described in this booklet were made out of linen of various qualities. The

exceptions are some of the wrap-around cloaks which may have been made out of wool. While reconstructing the various items of clothing I found that either the range and quality of linen cloth was no longer available. Or, if a suitable linen was found, it was usually extremely expensive. An acceptable substitute for the linen is a cotton cloth woven in a plain or tabby weave. A light-weight cotton, cheese cloth or muslin are suitable for making draped garments such as the wrap-around dresses and the sash kilt. A heavier weight cotton is needed for items such as the loincloths or cloaks. A twill weave cotton cloth similar to that used for denim jeans should not be used as it is too stiff and will not hang correctly.

All of the constructional details referred to in this booklet, such as seams and hems, are identical to those used for the ancient garments themselves. Diagrams are given in the glossary to show how these seams and hems are constructed. Most, however, will be familiar to those used to sewing and should not present many problems.

Nowadays raw edges are often neatened with a simple hem (see glossary). In Pharaonic Egypt, however, most seams were neatened with a rolled and whipped hem. This type of hem requires some practice in order to achieve a regular appearance, especially as no pins were used. If necessary a simple hem can be substituted for the rolled and whipped hem in the following instructions.

All of the measurements given in the booklet are in centimetres. The figures are based on the size of the original garments. If reconstructions are made then an allowance should be made for personal measurements. An extra 1.5 cm should be allowed for hems and seams, except for a rolled and whipped hem where an allowance of only 1.0 cm should be added.

Finally, most wrap-around garments in Egypt were wrapped from the left-hand side, around the back, to the right-hand side of the body (from the wearer's point of view).

CHRONOLOGY

Late Predynastic	*ca.* 3000 B.C.
Early Dynastic Period	*ca.* 2920-2575 B.C.
Old Kingdom	*ca.* 2575-2134 B.C.
First Intermediate Period	*ca.* 2134-2040 B.C.
Middle Kingdom	*ca.* 2040-1640 B.C.
The Second Intermediate Period	*ca.* 1630-1532 B.C.
The New Kingdom	*ca.* 1550-1070 B.C.

FURTHER READING

Because the following work is intended to be a general introduction to the construction of Pharaonic Egyptian clothing, no references are given to the whereabout of garments now in specific collections and to the sources of the various illustrations. The following works may be consulted if more background information about the garment types is required:

Bonnet, H., 1917. *Die ägyptische Tracht bis zum Ende des neuen Reiches*, Leipzig.

Hall. R., 1981a, "Fishing-net dresses in the Petrie Museum", *Göttinger Miszellen*, 42 (1981), 37-43.

Hall, R., 1981b, "The Pharaonic *mss* tunic as a smock?", *Göttinger Miszellen*, 43 (1981), 29-37.

Hall, R., 1985. "The cast-off garments of yesterday. Dresses reversed in life and death", *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, 85 (1985), 235-245.

Hall. R. 1986. *Egyptian Textiles*, Shire Egyptology, Aylesbury.

Janssen, J.J., 1975. *Commodity Prices from the Ramessid Period*, Brill, Leiden.

Riefstahl, E. 1944. *Patterned Textiles in Pharaonic Egypt*, Brooklyn.

Riefstahl, E. 1970. "A note on ancient fashions: four early Egyptian dresses in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston", *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, 68 (1970), 244-249.

Vogelsang-Eastwood, G. M. (in press). *Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing* (Brill, Leiden).

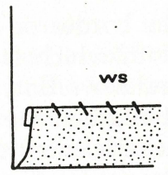
GLOSSARY

hem	the border or edging of a piece of cloth which is usually folded over and sewn down in some manner to strengthen the area or prevent the material from unravelling
longitudinal edge	the side edges of a piece of cloth
seam	the junction made by sewing together the edges of two or more pieces of cloth
selvedge	the side edge of a textile where the weft turns back
transverse edge	the 'top' and 'bottom' of a piece of cloth
warp	the system of parallel threads which is kept under tension in the loom
warp-fringes	length of warp threads along the transverse edge of a piece of cloth. The threads are plaited or twisted together and then knotted at the bottom. They are made by hand after the cloth has been woven
weft	the system of threads which run horizontally or from side to side on the loom.
weft-fringes	series of compact loops which extend from the selvedge of the cloth. The fringe is created during the weaving of the cloth.

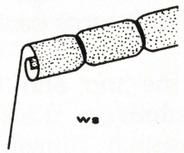
The terminology used in this glossary has been based on A. Morrell, *The ATN Guide to Structural Sewing: Terms and Techniques*, Manchester 1989, and D. Burnham, *Warp and Weft*, Toronto 1980

HEMS

simple hem

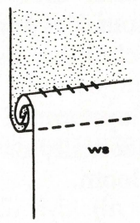


rolled and whipped hem

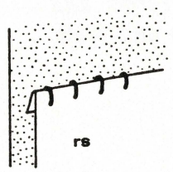


SEAMS

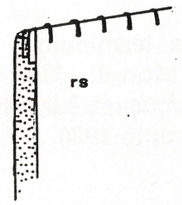
flat seam (open hemmed double-seam)



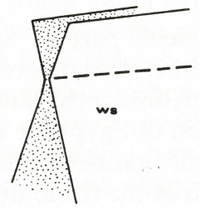
overcast seam



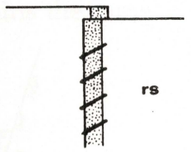
or



overlap seam



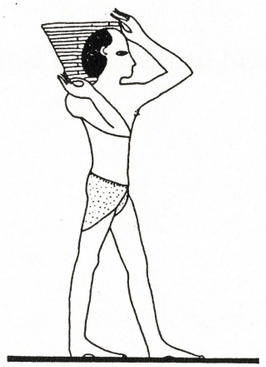
simple seam



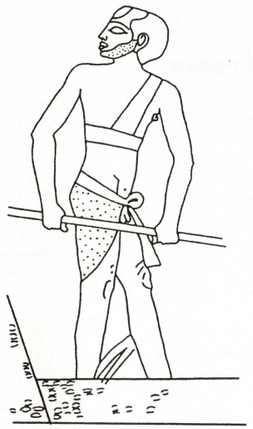
RS - right side of the cloth
WS - wrong side of the cloth

LOINCLOTHS

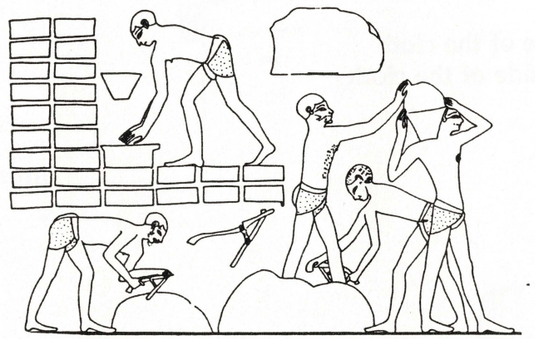
A loincloth is a simple garment, part of which is wrapped around the waist while the rest is drawn between the legs. It is sometimes called a breech cloth or breech clout. Loincloths were used by most of the population of Egypt for virtually all of the Pharaonic period. It is a versatile garment which could be worn by itself, either open or closed at the front; tied at the top with a sash or worn under other garments.



Man wearing a closed loincloth



Man wearing an open loincloth fastened with a sash



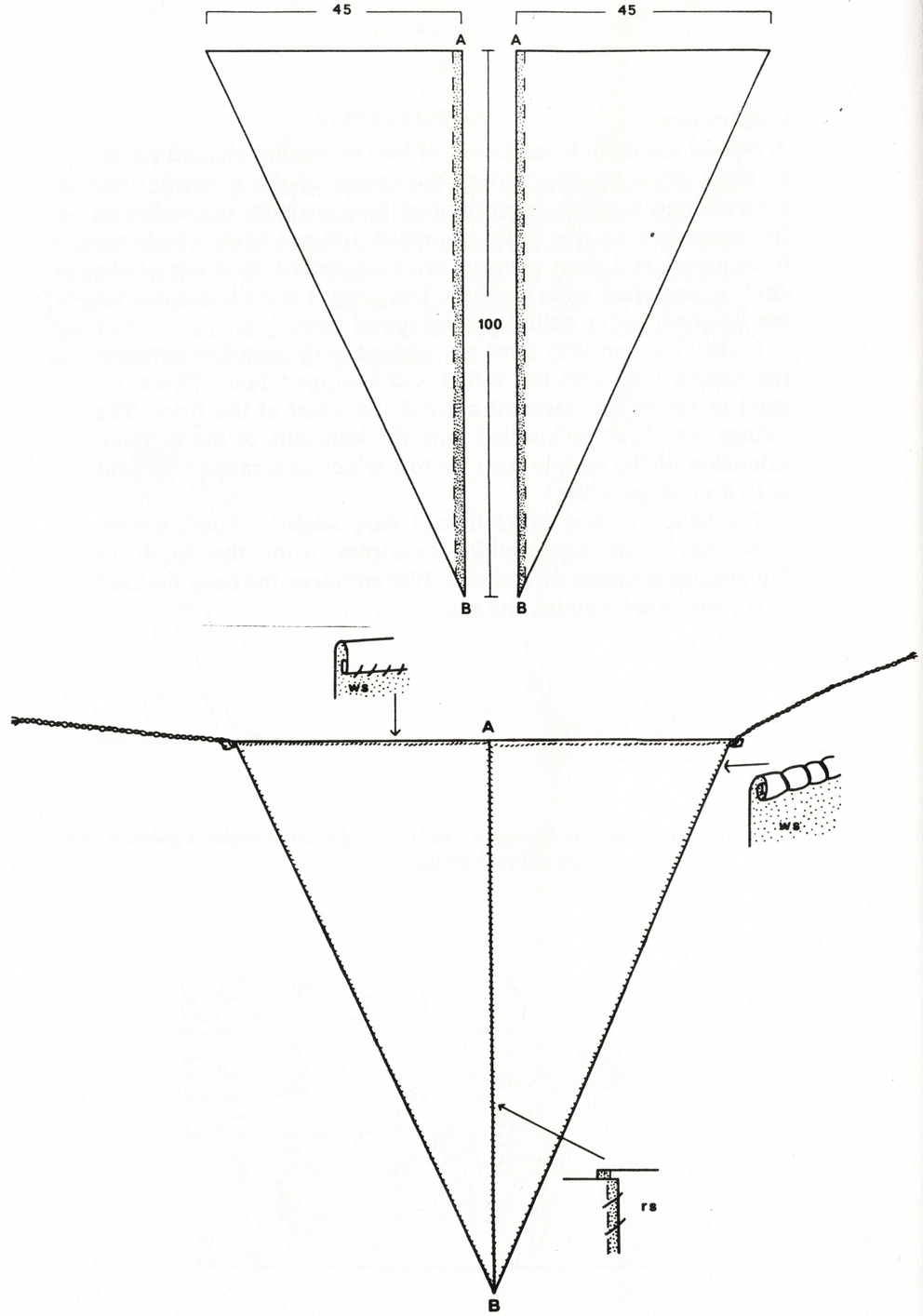
Group of men wearing closed loincloths fastened with sashes

Construction

A typical loincloth is made out of two triangular shaped pieces of cloth sewn together down the centre of the garment. The central seam is made from the two long, straight edges (using the selvedges of the cloth) of about 100 cm each which are overlapped and then overcast (overlap seam). The top of the cloth is neatened with a simple hem, while the diagonal sides are finished with a rolled and whipped hem.

Loincloths normally have two strings at the junction between the simple hem and the rolled and whipped hem. These are used to fasten the garment around the waist at the front. The strings can either be knotted onto the loincloth, or made by an extension of the simple hem on top which is wrapped around with a piece of string.

The shape of the loincloth can vary slightly. For instance, some have flat tops, while examples from the tomb of Tut'ankhamun have curved tops. Nevertheless, the basic method of construction remains the same.

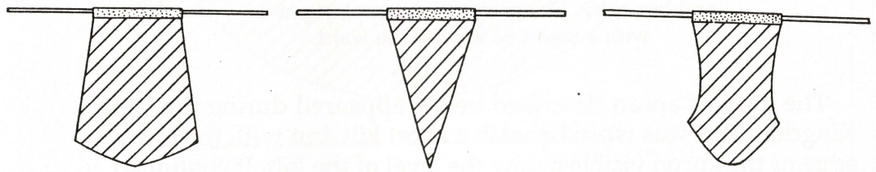


Construction of a typical loincloth

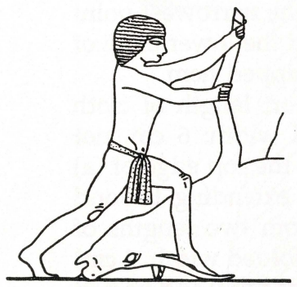
APRONS

An apron is a separate item worn by men, either by itself or over another garment such as a kilt. Aprons were worn from at least the Old Kingdom onwards. The garment consists of one or more pieces of cloth attached to a belt, sash or band which is fastened around the waist. In general, the apron panel only covers the genital region.

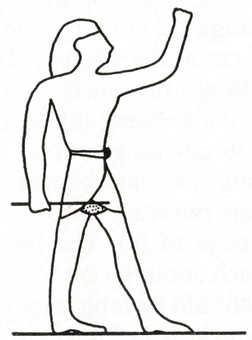
Aprons can range in form from several strips of cloth bunched together, to simple triangular shapes or even elaborately pleated objects which extend from the waist to the ankles. Although generally made of cloth, it is possible that during the New Kingdom examples were made of beadwork, or metal inlaid with glass paste or semiprecious stones.



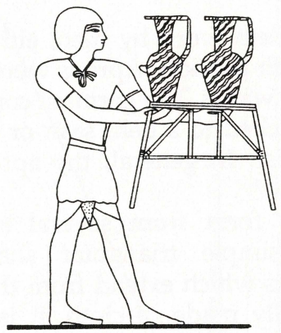
Some variations in the form of an apron



Man wearing a simple apron made from several lengths of cloth attached to a sash



Man wearing a rounded apron underneath a short kilt



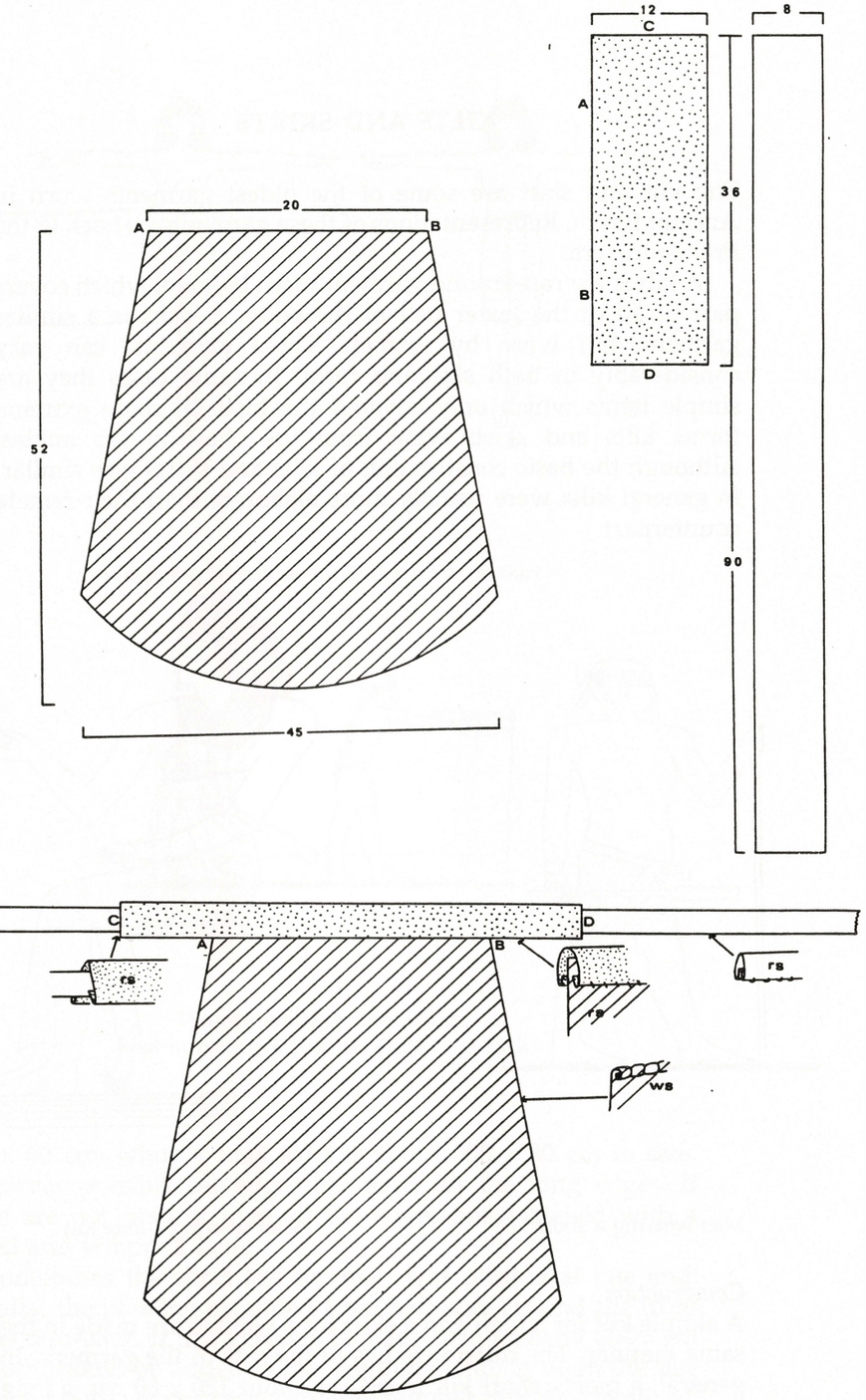
Man wearing a pointed apron underneath a short kilt and bag-tunic. The garments are kept in place with a sash tied around the waist

The form of apron described below appeared during the Old Kingdom and was worn beneath a short kilt, but with the lower edge of the apron visible below the level of the kilt. It continued to be worn well into the New Kingdom.

Construction

A typical apron is made from three sections: (a) the main body of the apron; (b) the waistband and (c) two ties. The largest piece (a) is either made from a sloping rectangular shape which is narrower at the top than the bottom and which has a rounded lower edge (52 cm long and about 20 cm at the narrowest point and 45 cm at the widest). The long sides and the lower edge of the cloth are neatened with a rolled and whipped hem.

The waist band (b) is made out of a short length of cloth about 36 cm long and 12 cm wide (folded width: 6 cm, not including the seam allowance). It is sewn to the top edge of (a) using an overcast stitch, with about 8 cm extending beyond either edge of (a). The ties (c) are made from two lengths of cloth each about 90 cm long and 8 cm wide (folded width: 4 cm) which should be long enough to go around the body and be tied at the back. It is folded in half lengthwise and then the seam allowance is pressed under.

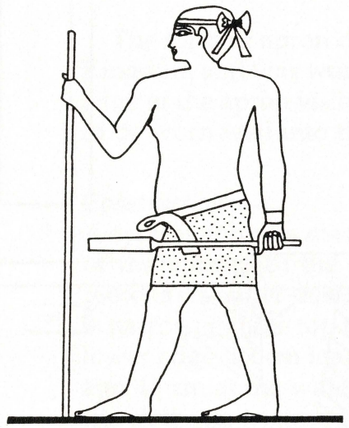


Construction of a typical apron

KILTS AND SKIRTS

The kilt and skirt are some of the oldest garments worn in Ancient Egypt. Representations of these garments go back to the Prehistoric era.

A kilt is a wrap-around garment worn by men, which covers part or all of the lower half of the body. A skirt is a similar garment, but worn by women. These garments can vary considerably in both size and form. In some cases they are simple items which only covered the hips. In more extreme forms kilts and skirts went from the chest to the ankles. Although the basic construction of kilts and skirts was similar, in general kilts were usually more elaborate than their female counterpart.

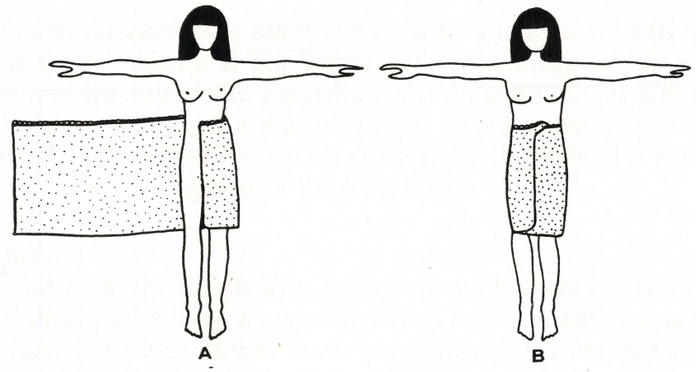


Man wearing a short kilt

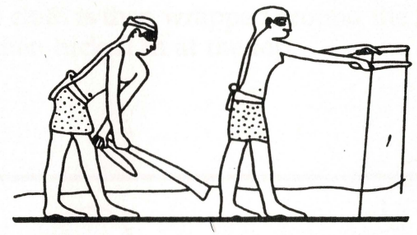
Man wearing a long kilt

Construction

A simple kilt for a man and a skirt for a woman are made in the same manner. The difference lies in the size of the garment. In general, a man's short kilt measures about 120 x 60 cm, a long kilt is about 300 x 100 cm. A short skirt for a woman is about



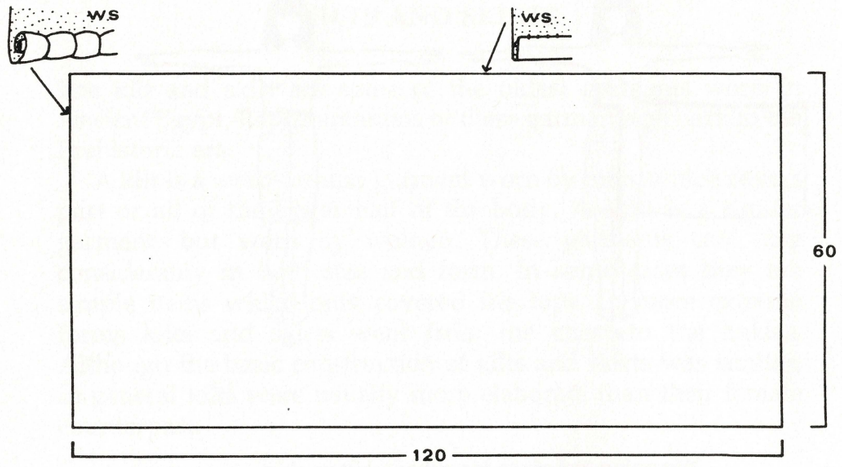
Wrapping technique for either a kilt or skirt



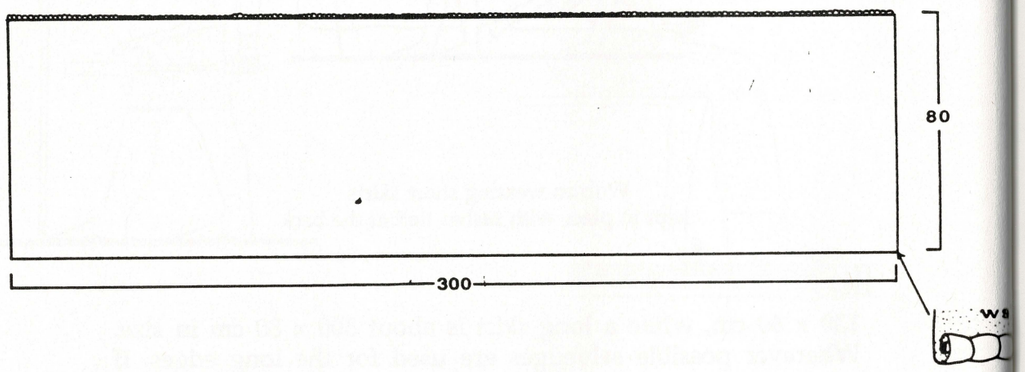
Women wearing short skirts
kept in place with sashes tied at the back

130 x 60 cm, while a long skirt is about 300 x 80 cm in size. Wherever possible selvedges are used for the long edges. If these are not present then all the edges are neatened with a rolled and whipped hem.

Sometimes the short kilt for men was pleated at one end. Usually, the pleating extended from half-way around the front to the mid-back. If this garment is made then an extra 60-75 cm of cloth should be added to the length depending upon the size (between 5-10 cm per pleat) and the number of pleats required.



Construction of a typical short kilt



Construction of a long skirt

Pharaonic cloth was often woven with a looped weft-fringe along the selvedge and this fringe was occasionally left on and shown at the top of the garment. As cloth is no longer woven with this weft-fringe, a substitute can be made for it from a short plaited fringe or loops set closely together which is sewn onto the cloth along one of the long edges.

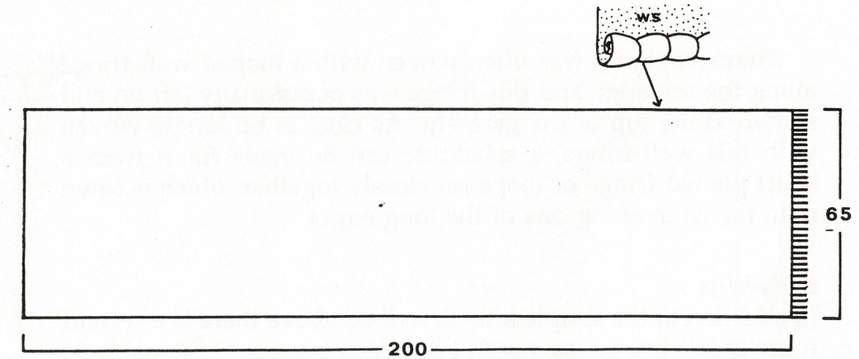
Sash-kilts

In addition to the simple kilts described above there is a second form of kilt known as a sash-kilt which became fashionable in the New Kingdom. It was worn over other garments, notably, the bag-tunic.

There were two basic methods of wrapping the sash-kilt: the first method (A) involves a length of cloth which is wrapped around the hips once and then tied with a simple half knot at the front. The ends are then allowed to hang decoratively down the front. In the second method (B) one end of the sash is allowed to hang down from the waist to just above the knees. The rest of the cloth is then wrapped around the hips (from left to right) and then tucked in at the top.

Man wearing a sash-kilt wrapped in method A

Man wearing a sash-kilt wrapped in method B

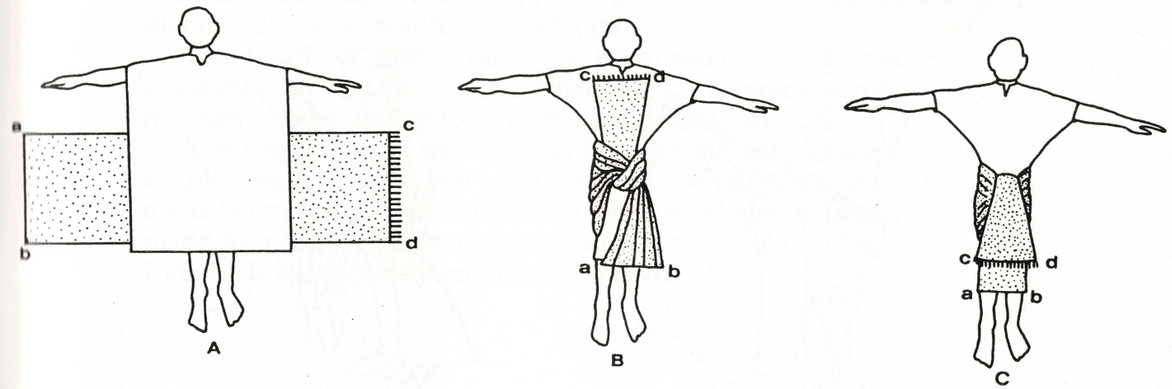


Construction of a typical sash-kilt

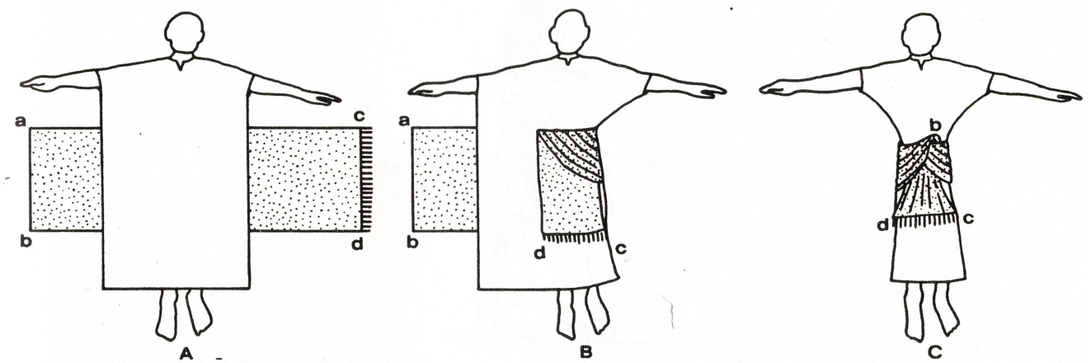
Construction

A sash-kilt is made from a length of cloth neatened along the long edges with a whipped and rolled hem. If the first method of tying a sash kilt type is used then a length of cloth about 200 x 65 cm is required. If the second type is followed then 150 x 50 cm is needed. There are two methods for neatening the shorter transverse edges. Firstly were both edges are finished with a whipped and rolled hem. Secondly, where one edged is hemmed, while the second is neatened with a plaited fringe made by unravelling part of the cloth.

Method A



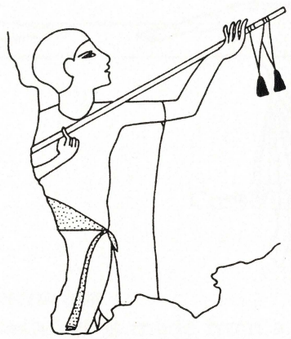
Method B



Two methods for wrapping a sash-kilt

SASHES

Sashes are long, narrow lengths of cloth which were often used to secure another garment, for example, a kilt or skirt. In most cases such sashes were worn around the waist in various manners.



Man wearing a plain sash, a short kilt and apron. Over these garments he is wearing a bag-tunic

Man wearing a long, wrapped fringed sash over a short kilt

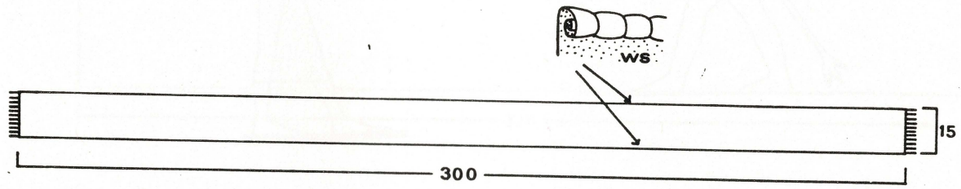
Prince wearing an elaborate sash with tassels wrapped several times around the body. The sash is worn over a short kilt and a long bag-tunic

Construction

The length of a sash depends on how it is meant to be worn. A sash which only goes around the waist once before being knotted at the front should be about 150 cm in length. While a sash which is meant to be wrapped several times around the body and then allowed to hang down the front in a decorative manner will be several times this length.

The width of sashes can vary from about 5 to 20 cm depending on function and personal taste. A common width, however, would appear to be between 12 and 15 cm.

The long edges of the sash can be neatened with either a simple hem or a rolled and whipped hem. The transverse ends are either neatened with a hem or a series of fringes or tassels made by plaiting the longitudinal threads. The length of the fringing is based purely on individual taste.

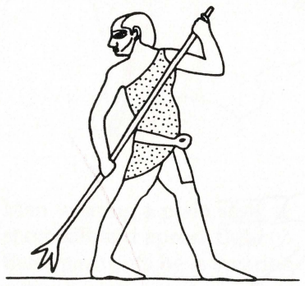


Construction of a typical, simple sash with fringed ends

ARCHAIC WRAP-AROUNDS

The archaic wrap-around is one of the oldest Pharaonic Egyptian clothing types. It was worn in a similar manner by both men and women, although in general the female version was much longer than that worn by men.

The archaic wrap-around was made from a single rectangle of cloth. The top corner of the material was draped over the left shoulder. The cloth was then passed one or more times around the body and under the arms ending near the left arm-pit. The two top corners were tied together on the left shoulder, giving the impression of a shoulder strap. In order to keep the garment in place it was sometimes worn with a sash.

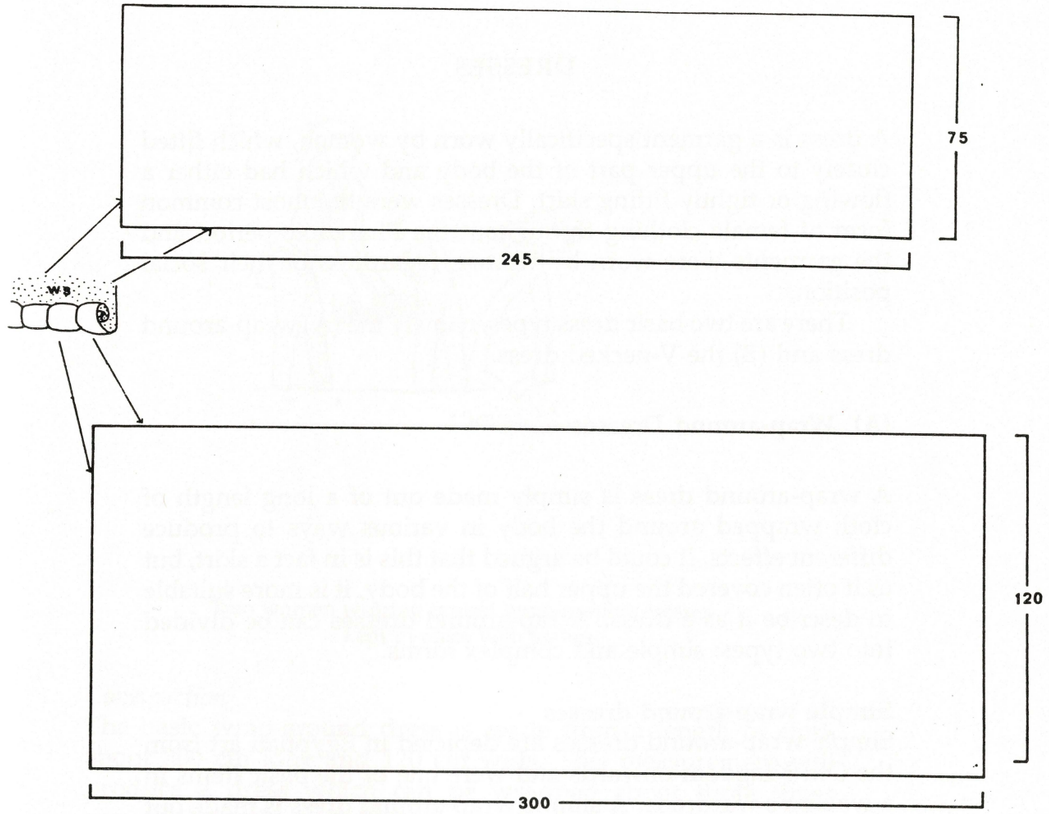


Man wearing a short archaic wrap-around with sash

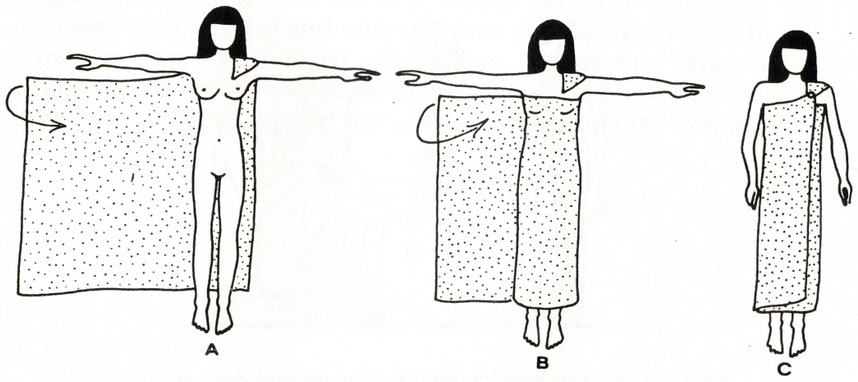
Woman wearing a long archaic wrap-around

Construction

An archaic wrap-around can be made from a single length of cloth (there is no evidence of fringing or tassels). The cloth should be between 150 cm and 245 cm long (depending on how many times it is wrapped around the body) and 75 cm wide for a short version for a man and about 300 cm long and 110 cm wide for a longer version worn by a woman. If possible the selvedges of the cloth should be kept for the longer edges while the shorter edges are neatened with a rolled and whipped hem. If this is not feasible then all the edges should be neatened with a simple hem.



Construction of a typical short, archaic wrap-around for a man and a long archaic wrap-around garment for a woman



Wrapping technique for the archaic wrap-around

DRESSES

A dress is a garment specifically worn by women, which fitted closely to the upper part of the body and which had either a flowing or tightly fitting skirt. Dresses were the most common form of female clothing throughout the Pharaonic period and the garments were worn by women regardless of their social position.

There are two basic dress types, namely the (A) wrap-around dress and (B) the V-necked dress.

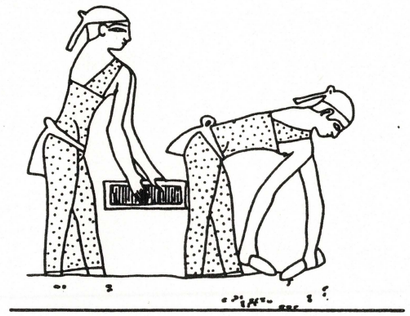
(A) Wrap-around Dresses

A wrap-around dress is simply made out of a long length of cloth wrapped around the body in various ways to produce different effects. It could be argued that this is in fact a skirt, but as it often covered the upper half of the body, it is more suitable to describe it as a dress. Wrap-around dresses can be divided into two types: simple and complex forms.

Simple wrap-around dresses

Simple wrap-around dresses are depicted in Egyptian art from the Old Kingdom onwards and were one of the basic items in a woman's wardrobe. A simple wrap-around dress is made out of a single length of cloth wrapped between one and three times around the body depending upon the amount of cloth available. The end of the cloth was tucked in at the top. Simple wrap-around dresses were worn either with or without shoulder straps (see below).

Group of women wearing typical wrap-around dresses with shoulder straps

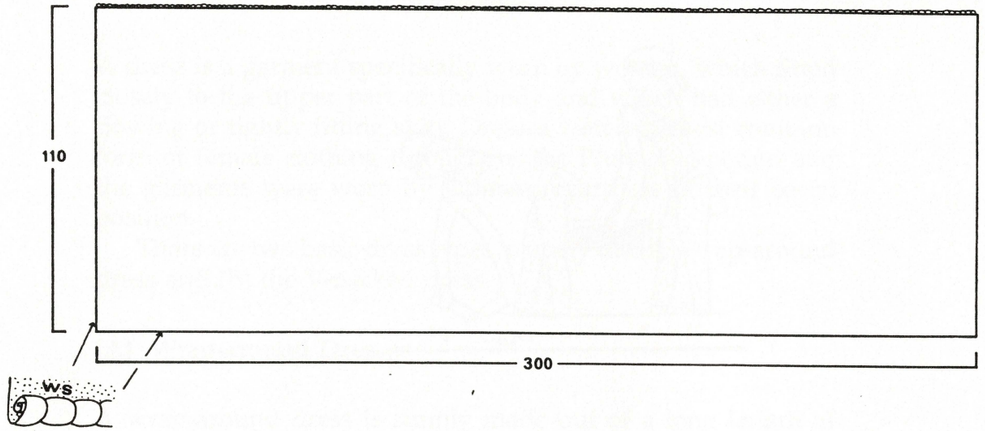


Two women wearing typical wrap-around dresses kept in place with sashes

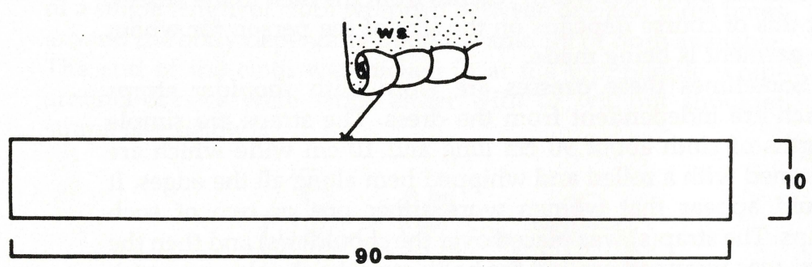
Construction

The basic wrap-around dress is made from a length of cloth about 300 cm long and 120 cm wide. This measurement will produce a dress which can be wrapped about three times around the body and which reaches from the bust to the ankles. But this of course depends on the size of the person for whom the garment is being made.

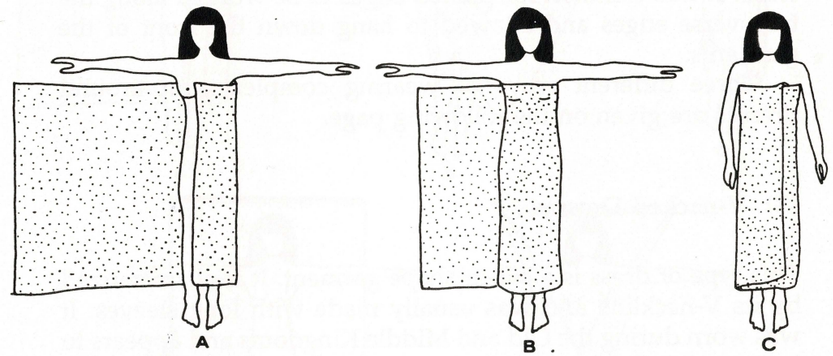
Sometimes these dresses are worn with shoulder straps which are independent from the dress. The straps are simple lengths of cloth about 90 cm long and 10 cm wide which are neatened with a rolled and whipped hem along all the edges. It would appear that women wore either one or two of such straps. The strap(s) was placed over the shoulder(s) and then the dress was wrapped around the body over the shoulder strap(s).



Construction of a typical, long
wrap-around dress (simple form)



Construction of a simple shoulder strap
for a wrap-around dress



Wrapping technique for a long wrap-around dress
(simple form)

Complex wrap-around dresses

During the New Kingdom period more complex versions of the wrap-around dress began to appear. Complex wrap-around dresses can be made out of one or two lengths of cloth. They were usually knotted instead of tucked in at the top in order to keep them in place.

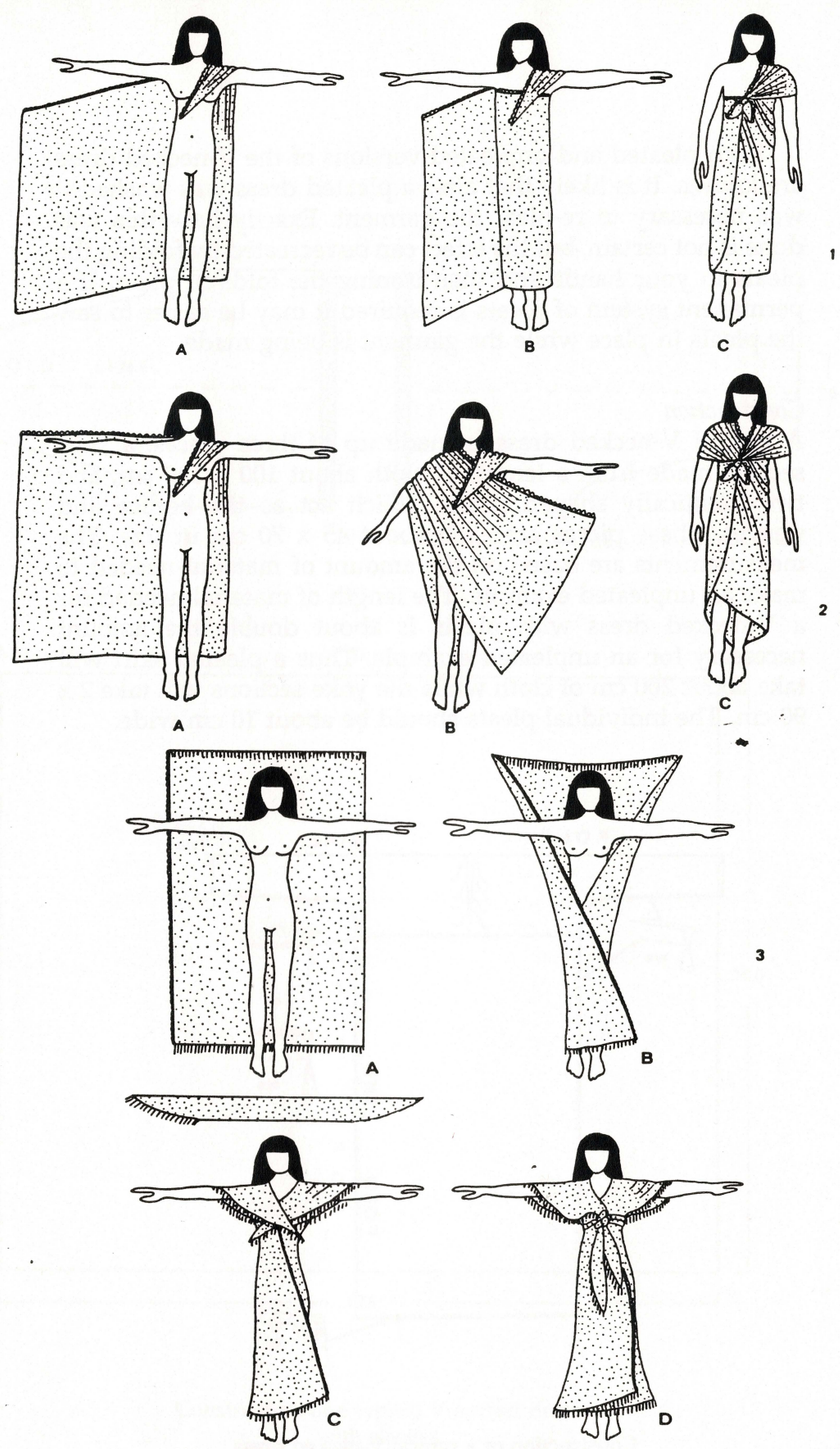
Construction
In order to produce the various effects, lengths of cloths of about 300 cm long and 110 cm wide are required for the main part of the dress, with a sash of about 150 cm long by 35 cm wide. It was common for plaited edges to be worked along the transverse edges and allowed to hang down the front of the garments.

Three different ways of wearing complex wrap-around dresses are given on the following page.

(B) V-necked Dresses

This type of dress is a cut-to-shape garment. It is characterized by its V-neckline and was usually made with long sleeves. It was worn during the Old and Middle Kingdoms and appears to have vanished about 2000 B.C., possibly due to the introduction of the bag-tunic (see the next section).

Appearance of a typical V-necked dress with sleeves

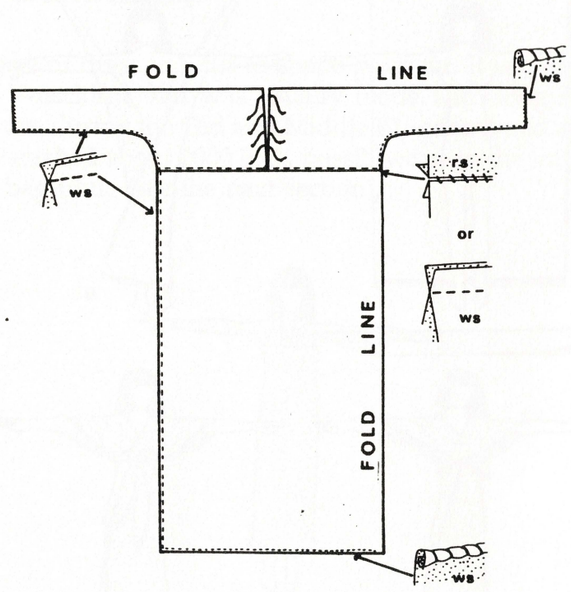


Wrapping techniques for three versions of a complex wrap-around dress

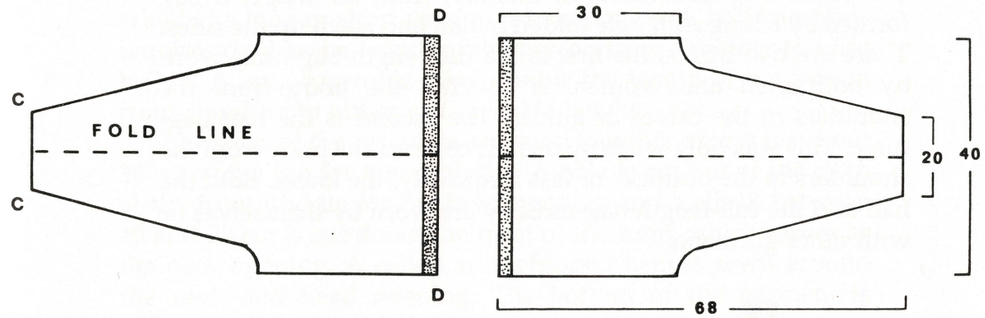
Both pleated and unpleated versions of the V-necked dress are known. It is likely that after a pleated dress was washed it was necessary to re-pleat the garment. Exactly how this was done is not certain, but the effect can be recreated by folding the pleats in your hands and then ironing the folds in place. If a permanent system of pleats is required it may be easier to sew the pleats in place while the garment is being made.

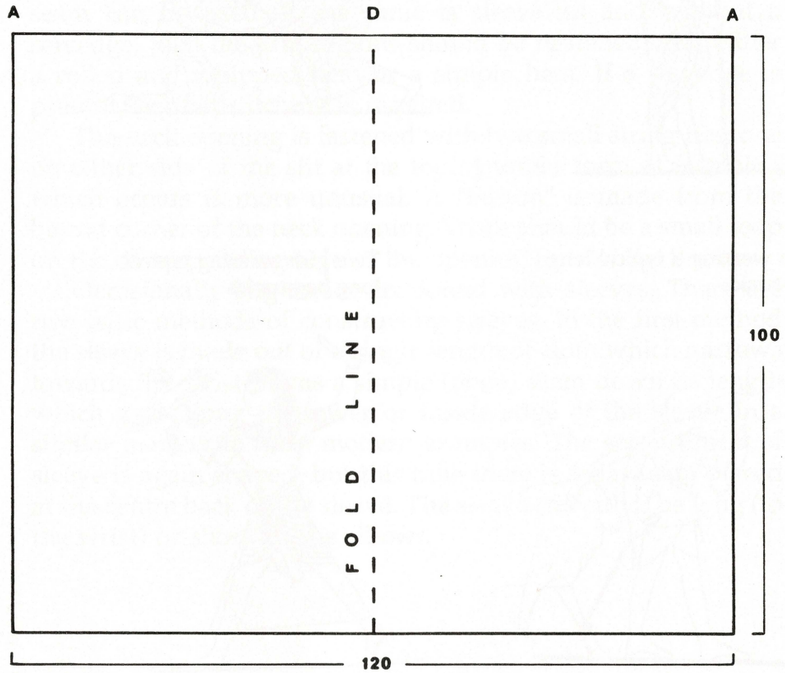
Construction

A typical V-necked dress is made up of three pieces: a shirt section made from a length of cloth about 100 x 120 cm, and two identically shaped pieces which act as the bodice and sleeves. These pieces are each about 45 x 70 cm in size. The measurements are based on the amount of material needed to make an unpleated example. The length of material needed for a V-necked dress with pleats is about double the amount necessary for an unpleated example. Thus a pleated skirt will take about 200 cm of cloth while the yoke sections will take 2 x 90 cm. The individual pleats should be about 10 cm wide.



Construction of a typical V-necked dress with sleeves





Construction of a typical V-necked dress with sleeves

BAG-TUNICS

The name bag-tunic derives, literally, from its shape: a bag formed by a long rectangle folded in half and sewn up the sides. There are two forms, the first is the full length bag-tunic worn by both men and women. It covered the body from the shoulders to the calves or ankles. The second is the half bag-tunic. This was only worn by men. It covered the body from the shoulders to the buttocks or less frequently, the knees. Both the half and the full-length bag-tunics were worn by themselves or with other garments.

Man wearing a typical long bag-tunic

Two girls wearing typical long bag-tunics

Man wearing a short bag-tunic underneath a short kilt. The garments are kept in place with a sash

Man wearing a long bag-tunic over a pointed apron and a short kilt. The whole ensemble is kept in place with a sash

Construction

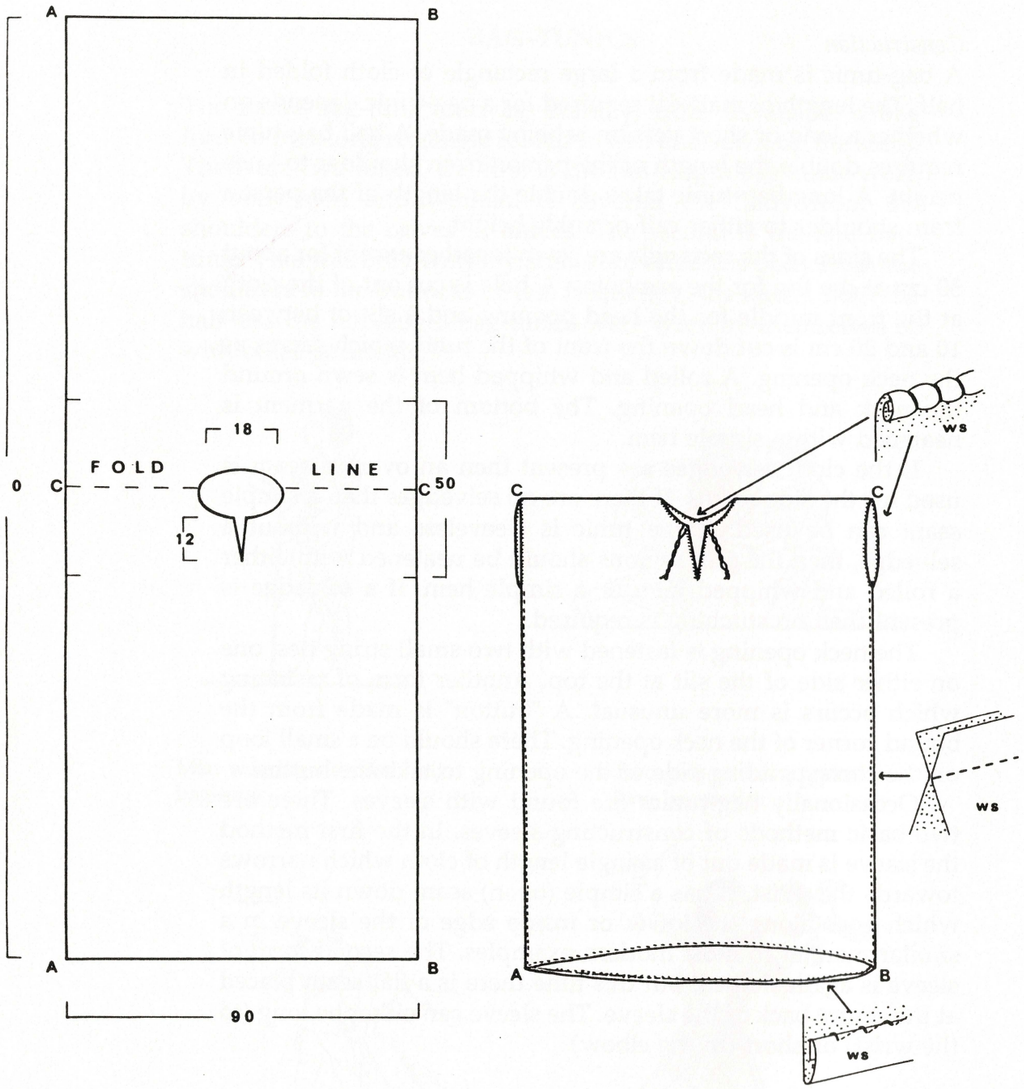
A bag-tunic is made from a large rectangle of cloth folded in half. The length of material required for a bag-tunic depends on whether a long or short version is being made. A half bag-tunic requires double the length of the person from shoulder to knee height. A long bag-tunic takes double the length of the person from shoulder to either calf or ankle height.

The sides of the rectangle are sewn together except for about 30 cm at the top for the armholes. A hole is cut out of the cloth at the front middle for the head opening and a slit of between 10 and 20 cm is cut down the front of the tunic which serves as the neck opening. A rolled and whipped hem is sewn around the neck and head opening. The bottom of the garment is neatened with a simple hem.

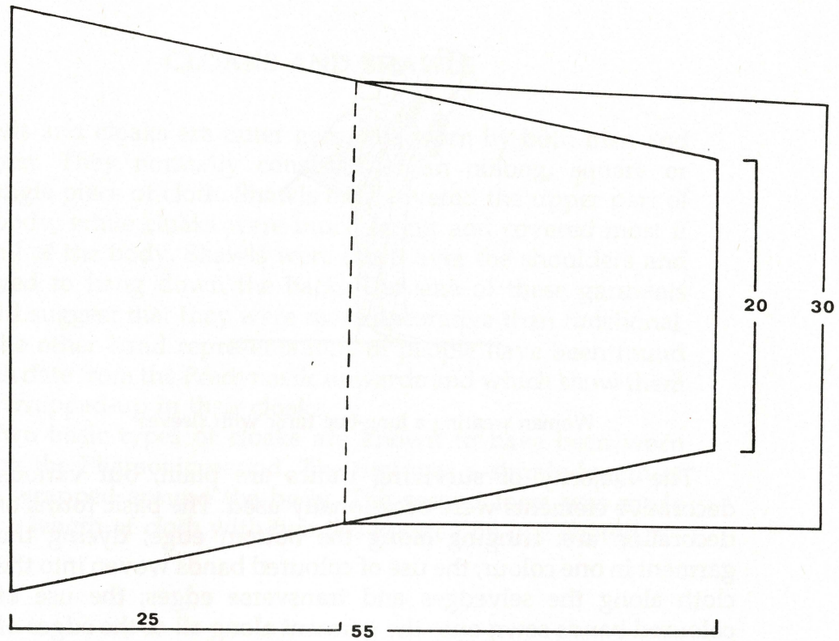
If the cloth selvedges are present then an overlap seam is used for the side seams. If there are no selvedges then a simple seam can be used. If the tunic is sleeveless and without a selvedge, then the arm regions should be neatened with either a rolled and whipped hem or a simple hem. If a selvedge is present then no stitching is required.

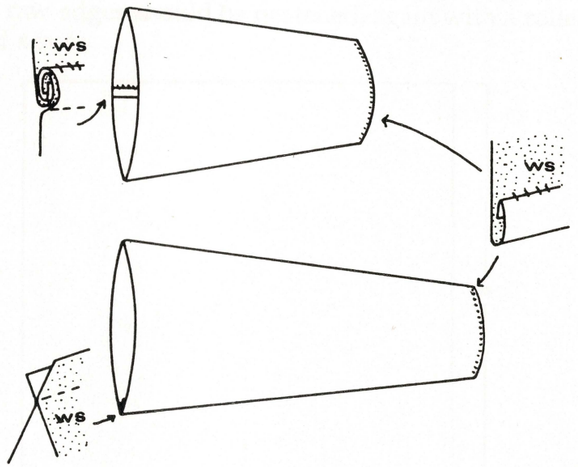
The neck opening is fastened with two small string ties, one on either side of the slit at the top. Another form of fastening which occurs is more unusual. A "button" is made from the bound corner of the neck opening. There should be a small loop on the corresponding side of the opening to take the button.

Occasionally bag-tunics are found with sleeves. There are two basic methods of constructing sleeves. In the first method the sleeve is made out of a single length of cloth which narrows towards the wrist. It has a simple (open) seam down its length which goes along the lower or inside edge of the sleeve in a similar manner to most modern examples. The second form of sleeve is again shaped, but this time there is a flat seam placed at the centre back of the sleeve. The sleeve can either be long (to the wrist) or short (to the elbow).



Construction of a typical long bag-tunic





Construction of two types of sleeves

Woman wearing a long-bag tunic with sleeves

The majority of surviving tunics are plain, but various decorative elements were occasionally used. The basic forms of decoration are: fringing along the bottom edge; dyeing the garment in one colour; the use of coloured bands woven into the cloth along the selvedges and transverse edges; the use of coloured bands sewn onto the garment along all of the edges of the garment and around the neckline. In addition, bead work, sequins of gold and faience, applied pattern bands, and embroidery were sometimes used to decorate bag-tunics.

CLOAKS AND SHAWLS

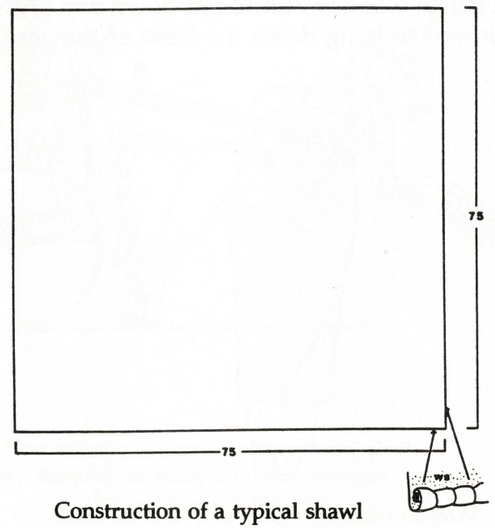
Shawls and cloaks are outer garments worn by both men and women. They normally consisted of an oblong, square or rectangle piece of cloth. Shawls only covered the upper part of the body, while cloaks were much larger and covered most if not all of the body. Shawls were worn over the shoulders and allowed to hang down the back. The size of these garments would suggest that they were more decorative than functional. On the other hand representations of people have been found which date from the Predynastic onwards and which show them well wrapped-up in their cloaks.

Two basic types of cloaks are known to have been worn during the Pharaonic period. The first was a simple length of cloth wrapped around the body. The second form was made from a length of cloth with two ties knotted on one shoulder.

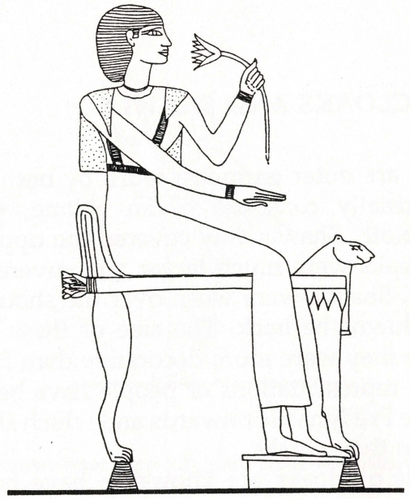
Shawl

Construction

A shawl can be made out of a square of fine cloth. The square should be about 75 cm in size. All of the edges are neatened with rolled and whipped seams or, if the selvedges are present, only the two raw edges should be neatened, again with a rolled and whipped seam.



Construction of a typical shawl

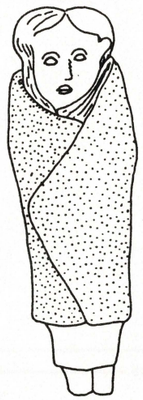


Woman wearing a short shawl over her shoulders

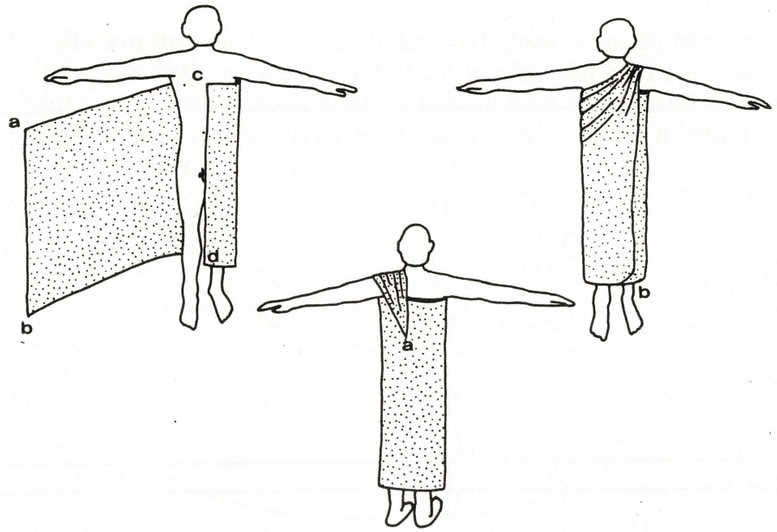
Cloak

As noted above there are two basic forms of cloaks, the wrap-around and the knotted cloak.

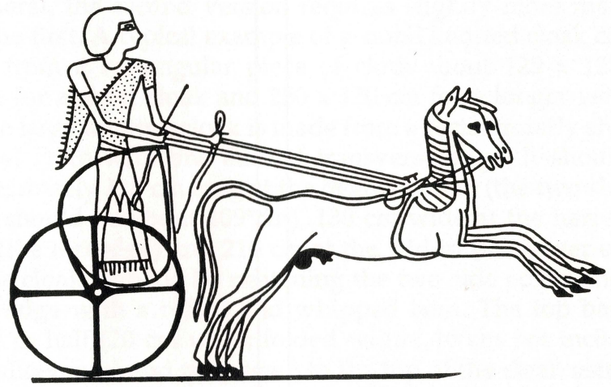
Wrap-around cloaks: a wrap-around cloak can be made from a length of cloth about 140 x 120 cm. The edges should be neatened with either a simple or a rolled and whipped hem. In more elaborate versions about 300 x 120 cm should be used. A weft-looped fringe was sometimes left down one of the longest ends and allowed to hang down the front of the garment.



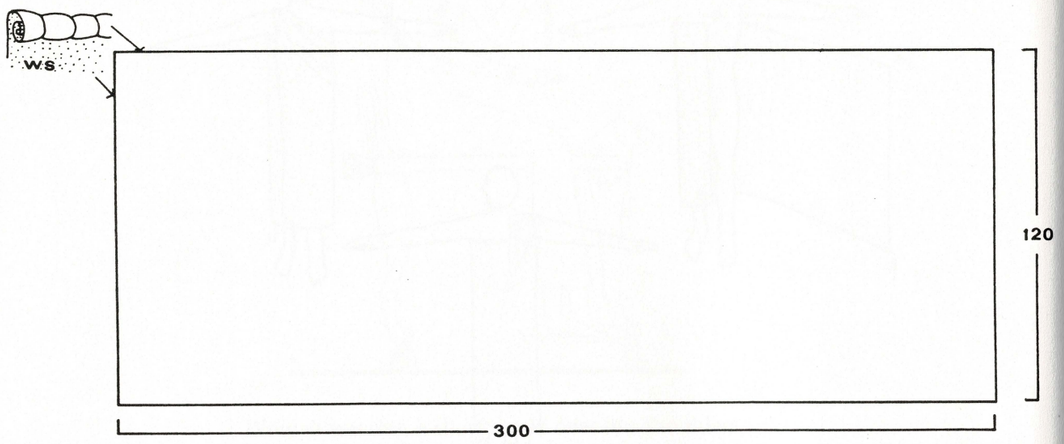
Woman wearing a long wrap-around cloak



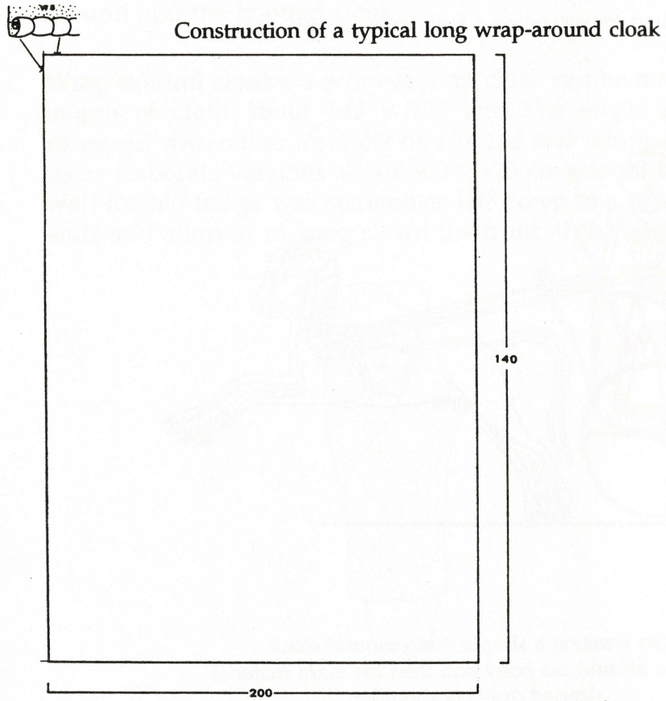
Method for wrapping a long wrap-around cloak



Man wearing a simple wrap-around cloak
wrapped around his body and then the extra material
draped over his shoulder

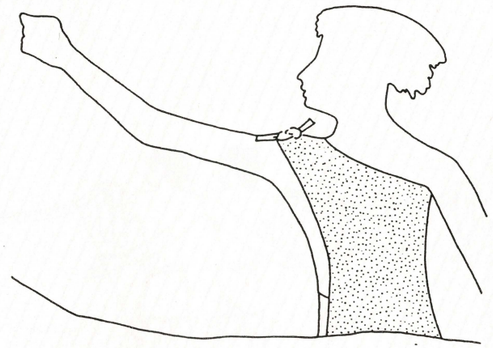


Construction of a typical long wrap-around cloak



Construction of a simple, knotted cloak

Simple knotted cloak: a simple knotted cloak is made from a rectangle ofcloth, about 200 x 140 cm in size. All of the edges should be neatened with either a simple hem or a rolled and whipped hem. It is worn by knotting the two corners together at one shoulder.

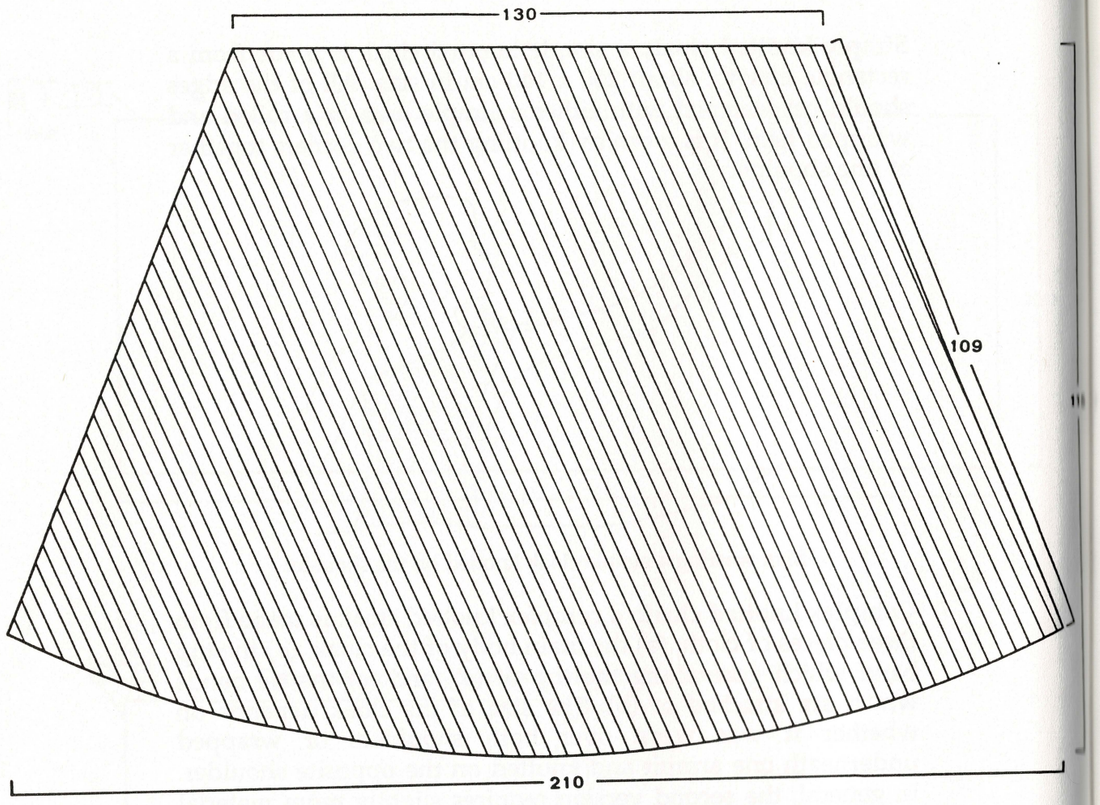


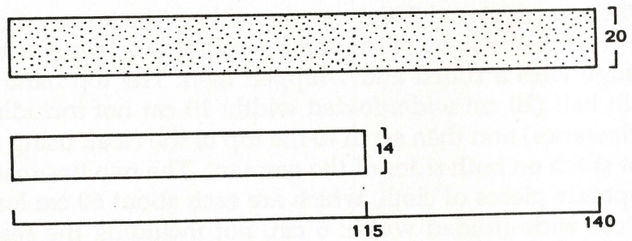
Man wearing a simple cloak knotted on the shoulder

Complex knotted cloak: a complex knotted cloak is made from three pieces of cloth: (a) the main body of the cloak, (b) the top band which goes along the top of (a), and (c) the tie bands which are attached to (b). The size of the cloak depends on whether it was worn over both shoulders or wrapped underneath one armpit and knotted on the opposite shoulder. In general, the second version requires slightly more material than the first. A typical example of a small knotted cloak can be made from a rectangular piece of cloth about 125 x 125 cm square for a short cloak and 250 x 120 cm for a longer version.

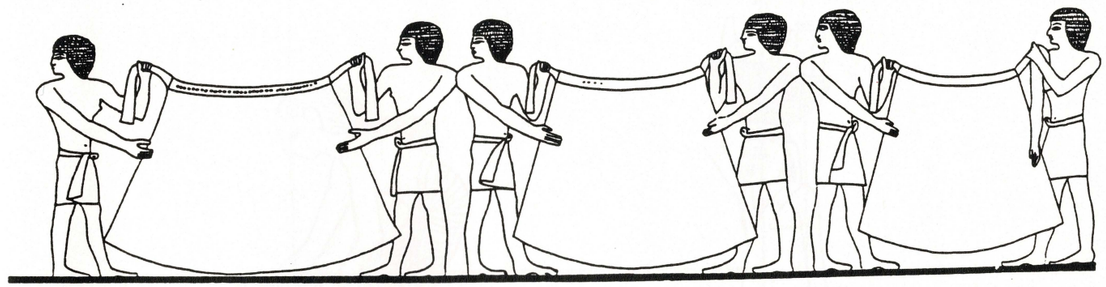
The large knotted cloak is made from a rectangularly shaped piece of cloth with one curved transverse edge. It should be approximately 115 cm long at the deepest point (the two shorter edges should be about 109 cm), 130 cm wide at the narrowest point (the top edge) and 210 cm at the widest (the lower edge).

The cloak is made by neatening the two side edges and the lower edge with a rolled and whipped hem. The top band is folded in half (20 cm wide; folded width: 10 cm not including seam allowance) and then sewn to the top of the cloak using an overcast stitch on both sides of the garment. The two ties made from separate pieces of cloth, which are each about 60 cm long and 12 cm wide (folded width: 6 cm, not including the seam allowance). They are inserted into the middle of the open ends of the top band and then stitched in place using an overcast or hemming stitch.





Construction of a typical knotted cloak with ties



Line of men holding up cloaks with ties

Two men wearing knotted cloaks. The cloak are of two different lengths

KERCHIEFS

A kerchief is a piece of cloth which covered part or all of the head. In general it is made out of a single piece of cloth, usually rectangular. More elaborate versions were also worn. These were made out of two pieces of shaped cloth sewn together. So far, however, these more complex forms seem to have only been found in the tomb of Tut'ankhmun and do not appear to have been in widespread use

Woman wearing a simple kerchief kept in place with a headband

Man wearing a simple kerchief tied in place at the back ofthe head

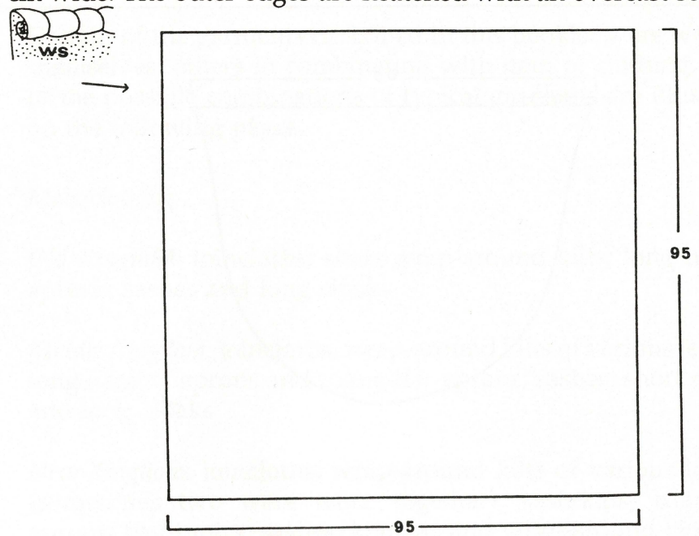
Construction

Simple kerchiefs: a simple kerchief can be made out of a rectangle of cloth approximately 95 x 95 cm in size. If the selvedges are not present then the raw edges should be neatened with a rolled and whipped hem.

The kerchief is kept in place with a band which either went around the head and was then knotted at the back of the head or it was fastened around the cloth at the nape of the neck.

Cut-to-shape kerchiefs: a typical example of this type of kerchief is made from two roughly semi-circular shaped piece

of cloths, approximately 65 cm long and at the widest point, 50 cm wide. The outer edges are neatened with an overcast seam.

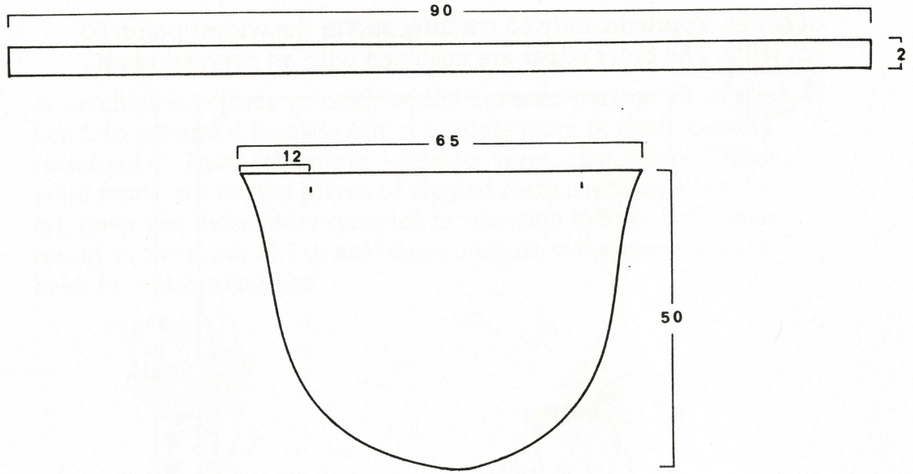


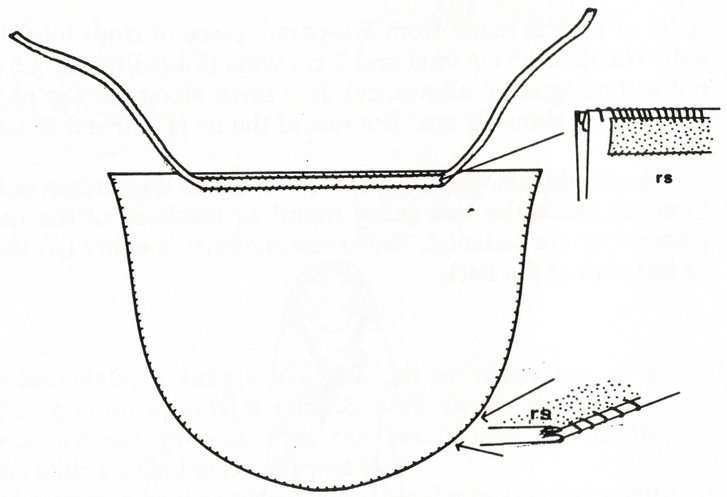
Construction of a typical simple kerchief

A tie or tape is made from a separate piece of cloth folded in half. The tie is 95 cm long and 3 cm wide (folded width: 1.5 cm not including seam allowance). It is sewn along the top of the kerchief for about 22 cm. The rest of the tie is allowed to hang free.

The kerchief is worn by placing the top of the cloth over the forehead, with the ties going round to the back of the nape where they are fastened. The excess material is either left loose or fastened at the back.

Man wearing a cut-to-shape kerchief





Construction of a typical cut-to-shape kerchief

SOME CLOTHING COMBINATIONS

Certain of the garments described in this booklet were worn by themselves, others in combination with item of clothing. Some of the possible combinations of typical garments are illustrated on the following pages.

Male clothing

Old Kingdom: loincloths; short wrap-around kilts; long narrow aprons; sashes and long cloaks

Middle Kingdom: loincloths; wrap-around kilts of various lengths, long narrow aprons and triangular aprons; sashes; short shawls and long cloaks

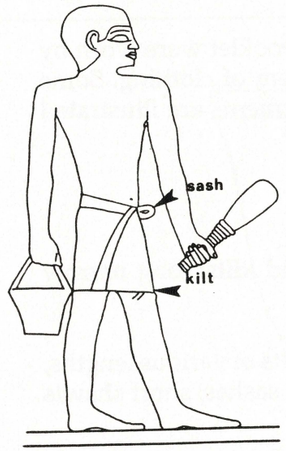
New Kingdom: loincloths; wrap-around kilts of various lengths (sometimes two were worn together); sash-kilts; triangular aprons; bag-tunics; sashes; knotted and wrap-around cloaks of various kinds

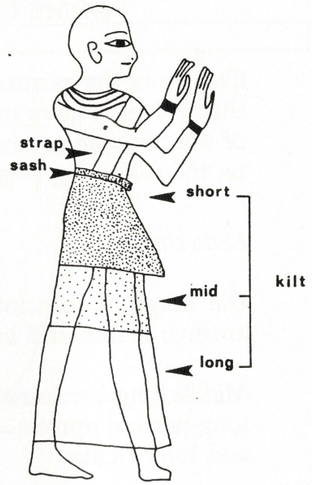
Female Clothing

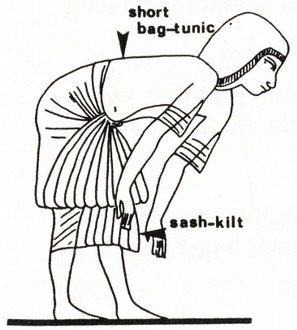
Old Kingdom: loincloths; skirts of various lengths; wrap-around dresses, usually simple forms; V-necked dresses; sashes and long cloaks

Middle Kingdom: loincloths; skirts of various lengths; wrap-around dresses; usually simple forms; V-necked dresses; sashes and long cloaks

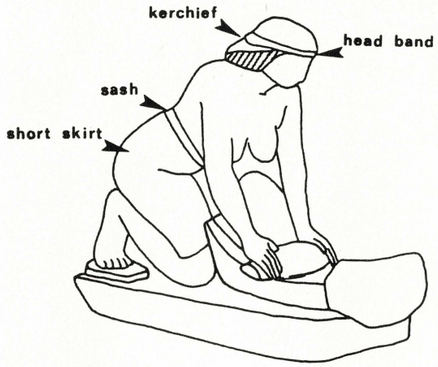
New Kingdom: loincloths; skirts of various lengths; wrap-around dresses, both simple and complex forms; sashes; bag-tunics and long cloaks

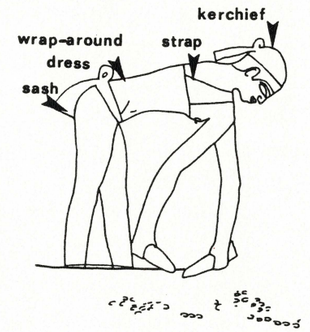

sash
kilt

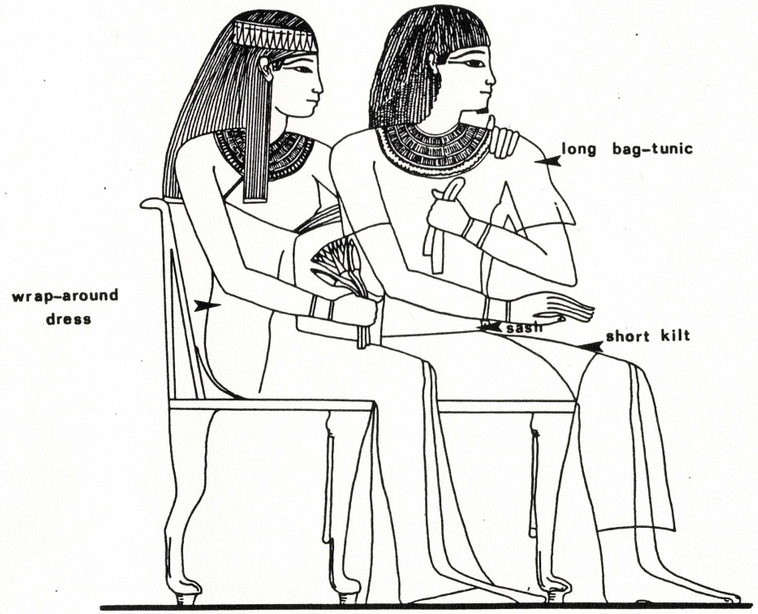

strap
sash
short
mid
long
kilt


short
bag-tunic
sash-kilt

long bag-tunic
sash
kilt
apron


kerchief
head band
sash
short skirt


kerchief
wrap-around
dress
strap
sash


long bag-tunic
wrap-around
dress
sash
short kilt